

Exterior decorating

By Debra Filcman
MPG Newspapers

DUXBURY — Everyone was soaring at Camp Wing last Thursday, as campers and volunteers worked together to plant the seeds for a greater camp experience.

The program, one of three for at-risk children run by Crossroads for Kids, wanted to leave behind a living memorial to their 35-year Crossroads trustee, Kenneth "Mike" Safe who passed away in 2003.

"We had this idea to honor his spirit and good work, doing something that he would be proud of," executive director Jeff Rumpf said.

The idea, was to take about 10 acres of Crossroads land, which used to be farmland, and restore much of it to its agricultural heyday.

The area was once the locale for one of the town's last farm stands, run by "Grandpa Soule."

The land, originally farmed in the 1600s by voyagers coming off The Mayflower, was extremely rich, Rumpf said.

The goals were manifold: Not only were they embarking on a laborious project to honor Safe's memory, but they were giving the children a goal to work toward, beautifying their camp environment and, hopefully, providing the campers with at least the full summer's worth of organic produce at the dining hall.

In order to accomplish the formidable goal, Camp Wing needed a pair of helping hands. Instead, 450 pairs descended on the camp last Thursday to help bring 25 different farm projects to fruition.

"If you can imagine

having 500 people to help you, you can really do almost anything," resident gardner Laurie Rumpf said.

The camp first turned to Boston Cares, a nonprofit organization that pairs groups like Camp Wing with willing corporate volunteers.

In turn, Boston Cares directed Digitas Inc., a national direct marketing agency with offices in nearby Boston, to help with the camp's endeavors.

"This was the biggest project with the most amount of volunteers from one company at one community site that we've ever done," said Boston Cares executive director, Patrice Keegan.

The organization typically works with about 120 schools and non-profit organizations each year, helping them find volunteers from about 50 different corporations.

Boston Cares usually works with the nonprofits in advance, scouring for volunteers on projects that they believe, can be completed in one day with the appropriate manpower.

"Companies like to encourage their employees to volunteer with projects where there is a real range of choices in what they can do," Keegan said. "And when people volunteer they want to feel that their time

was well spent."

There is a strong desire at Digitas for the company to be a good corporate citizen. That positive image translates into an employer that employees can believe in and a healthy working environment, Jeff Rumpf said, impressed that even the company's president participated.

Digitas employees were certainly proud of their work when they ended their day that went from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The scroll of projects included the creation of: 600 feet of permanent fencing, a teepee village, more than 20 designating signs, a vegetable garden, grape vineyard with arbors, cornfields and pumpkin patches, blueberry, strawberry and raspberry fields, butterfly garden in an old boat, ornamental gardens, a duck pond, and benches.

In previous years, the camp tended small gardens, with mostly vegetables. This year, the focus was put on adding fruit to the mix.

"The kids do all the work themselves," Laurie Rumpf said. "And they get so excited. They were just sitting there picking raw fruits and vegetables and eating them in the garden."

More than \$20,000 worth of materials were donated to the cause by various volunteers. Three truckloads of compost, 12 truckloads of wood chips, thousands of seeds, and hundreds of shovels and rakes were among those items received by the camp.

All money raised privately was also matched by the charitable Saquish Foundation, Rumpf said.

"It's important for the kids to learn to reap what they sow," Rumpf said.

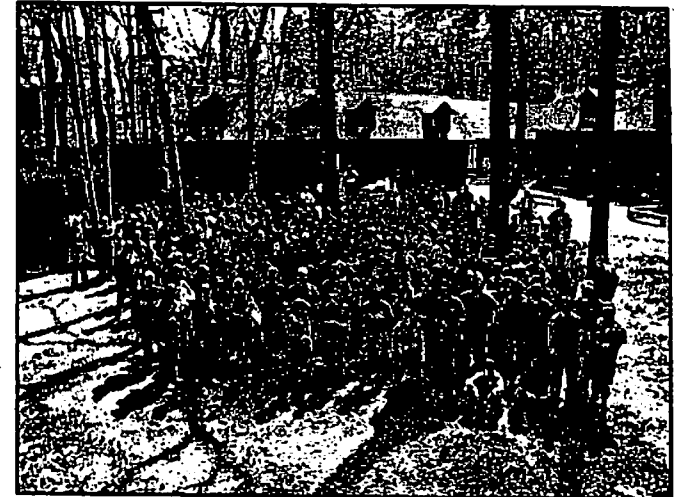
Crossroads for Kids, the umbrella under which Camp Wing operates, was first started in 1836. The idea, was to make sure city children grew up strong and healthy and with the opportunity to play outdoors.

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FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2005

Camp Wing gets new face



Staff photo

Group effort — The entire group of nearly 450 volunteers from Digitas Inc. gathered for a photo after a hard day's work.



Staff photo

Hard workers — Children took a moment to goof-off during the long working day that ran between 9:30 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.